

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently amended) A method for using topic tags in an Instant Messaging System, comprising:

identifying a topic by performing a first plurality of steps comprising:

displaying a topic tag for a chat using an instant messaging service that allows a first user to send and receive text messages in real time with ~~an other~~ a second user;

determining whether the first user wants to accept the topic tag;

responsive to determining that the first user does not want to accept the topic tag, determining whether the first user wants to distinguish the topic tag;

responsive to determining that the first user wants to distinguish the topic tag, entering a term for the topic tag by the user;

responsive to entering a term for the topic tag, determining whether the ~~other~~ second user accepts the term for the topic tag; and

responsive the ~~other~~ second user not accepting the term for the topic tag, using a default topic tag as the topic tag;

inserting the topic tag into ~~the chat's~~ a text of the chat;

responsive to the first user identifying a subtopic tag for the chat, inserting the subtopic tag into the ~~chat's-text~~ of the chat;

determining whether a turn has occurred;

responsive to determining that a turn has occurred, determining whether a topic shift has occurred;

responsive to determining that a topic shift has occurred, repeating the first plurality of steps; and

saving a transcript of the chat to a repository in an XML format;

searching the repository by performing a second plurality of steps comprising:

- determining whether the search will be a full text search;
- responsive to determining that the search will not be [[a]] the full text search,
- determining whether the search will be a filtered search;
- responsive to determining that the search will be [[a]] the filtered search, choosing a filter, wherein a plurality of types of [[the]] filter comprise: a topic tag, a user name, and a date;
- conducting the search;
- determining whether the search was satisfactory;
- responsive to determining that the search was not satisfactory, entering feedback by the user; and
- responsive to determining that the first user wants to view the full text of a found topic, displaying a segment of the transcript corresponding to the found topic;
- responsive to determining that another search is to be conducted, repeating the second plurality of steps;
- scanning topic tags from the transcript by performing a third plurality of steps comprising:
 - comparing a scanned topic tag to an auto alert table;
 - responsive to determining that there is a match between the scanned topic tag and the auto alert table, determining and executing an action that is associated with the scanned topic tag in the auto alert table;
 - wherein the action comprises exporting the transcript to an e-mail;
 - responsive to determining that there is another scanned topic tag, repeating the third plurality of steps;
 - wherein a plurality of bases upon which ~~the determining~~ a determination whether that a turn has occurred comprise:
 - an amount of textual data entered;
 - a time period; [[and]]or
 - a plurality of successive statements;
- wherein a turn means a shift in a textual communication during the chat indicated by the plurality of successive statements; and

wherein a topic shift means a change from a first topic or a first subtopic to a second topic or a second subtopic in the chat where the change is indicated by a selection of a new topic marker, a new subtopic marker, or a new topic input entry field and an attachment of the new topic marker or the new subtopic marker to a chat transcript or a chat transcript segment.